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NEW LIVE SHOW DATES**



**KEITH URBAN'S SPECIAL
SPOT IN THE HALL OF FAME**



NASHVILLE **Country** WEEKLY

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NOVEMBER 30, 2015

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Fine Wine

In the grand tradition of country story songs, few are as evocative and descriptive as the coming-of-age remembrance "Strawberry Wine." **MATRACA BERG**, who wrote the tune with **GARY HARRISON**, based the story on one very distinct childhood memory. "We used to go to our grandparents' dairy farm in the summer," Matraca recalled to *Country Weekly* in 1997. Evidently, Matraca and the local kids would often attempt to score some of the homemade wine available on the farm. "And I met this boy," Matraca continued. Matraca actually wanted "Strawberry Wine" for her own album, but plans for that record eventually fell through. The song ended up in its rightful place when **DEANA CARTER** recorded it for her debut project. Deana released "Strawberry Wine" in August 1996, and the song vaulted her from virtual unknown to instant country star. "Strawberry Wine," despite being a ballad with a running time of nearly five minutes, moved to the top of the charts on Nov. 23, 1996. It also won the 1997 Country Music Association awards for Single and Song of the Year.

2015

NOV. 23:
HOLIDAY RIMES



LeANN RIMES helps prepare a delicious holiday roast and performs four songs on the Hallmark Channel's *Home &*

Family: Home for the Holidays special on Nov. 23 at 8 p.m. ET.

NOV. 27-28:
GRAND WEEKEND

If you're visiting Nashville over the Thanksgiving weekend, it's a great time to catch the Grand Ole Opry at the famed Ryman Auditorium. Performers for the weekend of Nov. 27 and 28 include **VINCE GILL**, **TRACY LAWRENCE** and rising star **GRANGER SMITH**.



NOV. 26:
PARADE PACK

JENNIFER NETTLES and **JAKE OWEN** will perform at the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York, Nov. 26 on NBC, starting at 9 a.m. in all time zones.



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Within the space of a few hours, the whole world came to find out what industry insiders already knew—

CHRIS STAPLETON deserves to be heard. Now, thanks to his three CMA awards, he is.

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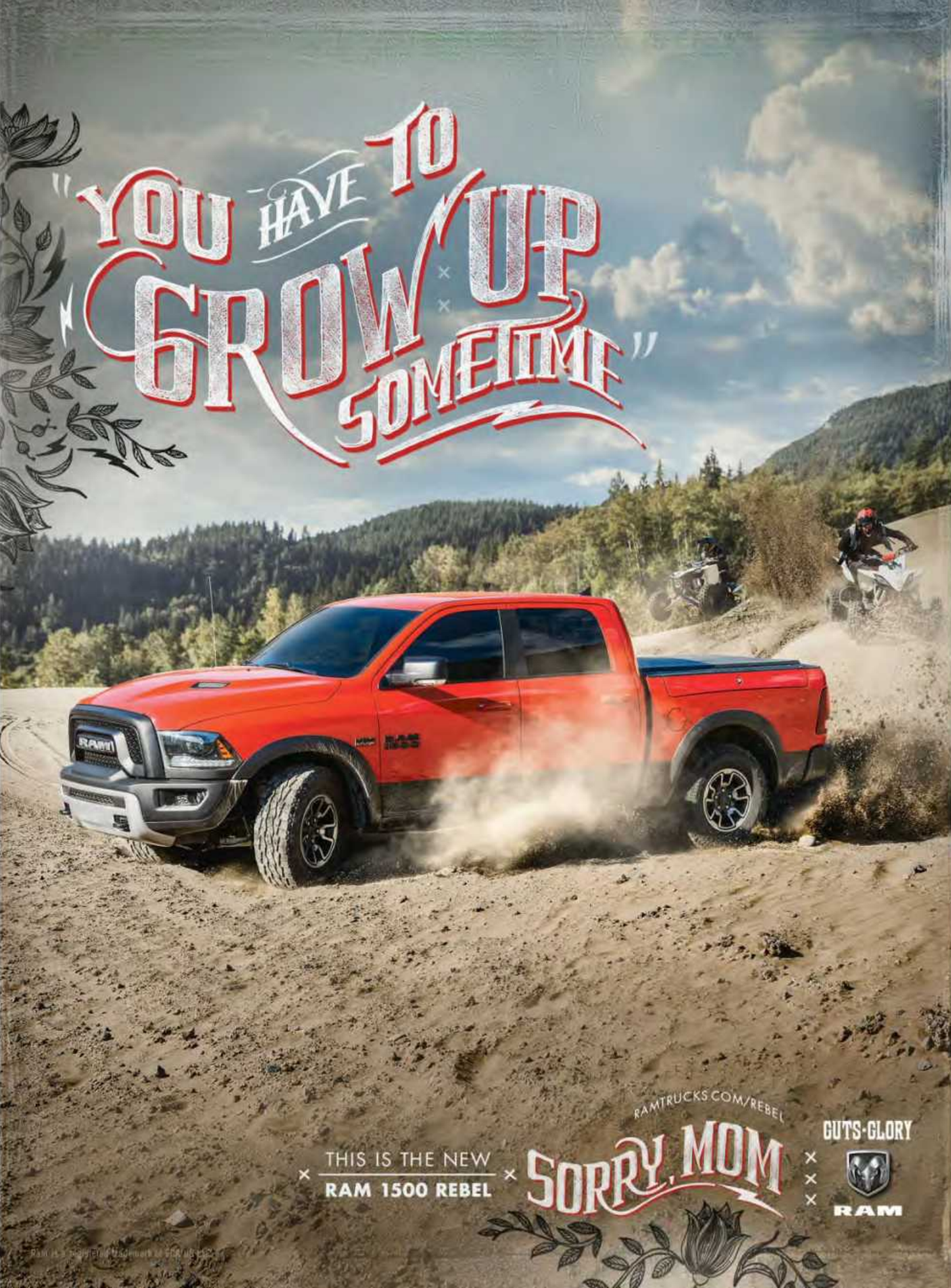
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PLUS! Check out our additional awards show highlights, including the stars strutting their finest on the red carpet.

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FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Readers,

Who is Chris Stapleton? That is the question I was hearing during the CMA Awards when Chris took home New Artist of the Year, Album of the Year and Male Vocalist of the Year honors. Many people may not have heard of Chris Stapleton (until now) but we here at *Nash Country Weekly* and our readers are well aware of Chris. We know Chris' history with The SteelDrivers and The Jompson Brothers, and we know his

incredible songwriting skills—he penned such hits as “Your Man” by Josh Turner, “Come Back Song” by Darius Rucker and “Drink a Beer” by Luke Bryan. But we also know that Chris has one of the best voices in country music and we couldn't be happier that more and more people are now getting to hear it. So we chose Chris Stapleton for the cover to answer the very question that everyone has been asking. Turn to page 36 for our cover story, because, ladies and gentlemen—This Is Chris Stapleton.

And speaking of the CMA Awards, in this issue we have all the glitz and glamour that goes along with country's biggest night. We take you to the red carpet, to the show and to the winners. If you missed it, don't worry, we were there for you. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees. You make country proud.

And I would like to take this moment to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving. I hope we can all spend time with our families and remember all the good things in our lives that we are thankful for. Happy Turkey Day!

Don't miss next week's issue, on stands Nov. 30.

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

LISA KONICKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

FROM THE READER



Shoot us an email, a comment or a tweet and let us know what you think!

Letters, *Nash Country Weekly*, 506 2nd. Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210

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letters@countryweekly.com

FACEBOOK:

facebook.com/countryweekly

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@countryweekly

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number with all correspondence. *Nash Country Weekly* assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material, including, but not limited to, photographs, artwork, manuscripts and letters. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

HOME (FREE) IS WHERE THE HEART IS

I have been disappointed in your lack of info on Home Free and their new album *Country Revolution*. They are awesome singers and have collaborations with

The Oak Ridge Boys and Charlie Daniels in the album. Every magazine and paper seems to concentrate on the same people. There are other good singers out there that have a strong fan base.
CONNIE CROWELL | Unionville, Tenn.

EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

Check out our Nov. 9 issue, which features Home Free on the Who's New page.

MIS-STATE-MENT

In your September 28th issue, you mentioned that Jewel was “Alaskan” born. Then, on The Leftovers page you said “Jewel isn't the only country singer to be born in Utah.” I'm confused. Love your magazine. Keep up the good work.

BETTE HYND | Regina, Saskatchewan

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Sorry for the confusion, Bette. The article about Jewel on page 50 that mentioned she is Alaskan-born was incorrect. Jewel grew up in Alaska but was born in Utah. So we were half right. NCW regrets the error.

FACEBOOK

Words of Well Wishes for Joey Martin Feek of Joey+Rory.

Praying for peace for Joey and Rory.
Praying for your friends and family as well.
SANDRA SHAW CARPENTER

Sending prayers to Joey and Rory and family. God bless you.
NANCY QUINN

Prayers to Joey's family and may God surround her with His loving hands.
MELISSA BLANKENSHIP

Sending prayers to Joey and Rory and entire family. God have mercy and bless them.
BETTY HOLLAND

Prayers for Joey, Rory and her family. Love you all.
HOLLY MARIE HOWELL

My thoughts and prayers are with Joey and Rory and family.
ROSIE TVIEDE

TWITTER

@countryweekly thanks for being the BOMB and sending a little love our way RE: <http://ThisNashvilleLife.com>
KELLEIGH BANNEN | @kelleighbannen

Just bought @countryweekly! I had to buy it @ScottyMcCreery @Lauren_Alaina and @coleswindell were all in it!!
COURTNEY GRIFFIN | @Courtneyg3149

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FIRST TAKE

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

William Shatner, dressed as a *Star Wars* stormtrooper, joined co-hosts Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley onstage at the CMA Awards show. After ribbing Sam Hunt for stealing his talking bit, Shatner did a little talk-singing of his own, delivering a few lines of Little Big Town's "Girl Crush" to the delight of the crowd.



photo by David J. Phillip/CHN



THE COUNTRY BREW

A SWEET TASTE OF ALL COUNTRY

Opening Act



THANK GOODNESS

LUKE BRYAN will give us one more reason to be grateful this Thanksgiving holiday. The country superstar will perform live at AT&T Stadium during halftime of the Dallas Cowboys game against the Carolina Panthers on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, kicking off The Salvation Army's annual Red Kettle Campaign. The nationally televised halftime performance marks the 19th year the Dallas Cowboys have partnered with The Salvation Army to launch the annual campaign, which raises millions of dollars throughout the holiday season.

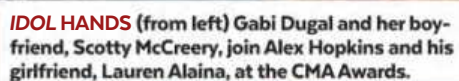
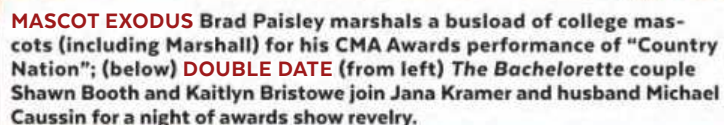
photo by Daniel DeSlover/Corbis



(Above) **TEXAS TORNADOES** Kacey Musgraves (left) and Lee Ann Womack crush on each other on the CMA red carpet; (right) **MAKING NEW FRIENDS** (from left) Craig Morgan, Cam and Thompson Square seem like a well-dressed but random assortment of artists to be seen hanging on the red carpet.



"CRUSH" RUSH (from left) Songwriters Lori McKenna, Liz Rose and Hillary Lindsey accept the CMA award for Song of the Year for "Girl Crush."





(Above) **SUIT AND ONE TIE** Brett Eldredge (left) and Sam Hunt get ready for an epic suave-off; (below) **SOUTHERN STUNNERS** Kelsea Ballerini (right) invited 17-year-old Allie Allen, who is battling brain cancer, to be her guest at the CMA Awards show.



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HOST ADVENTURES Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley co-host the CMA Awards for their eighth consecutive year.



(Above) **RIGHT SIDE OF MEMPHIS** Justin Timberlake and Trisha Yearwood give someone (perhaps Garth?) the stinkeye.

Three-time winner Chris Stapleton and wife Morgane





(Above) **YEAH, BABY!** Maddie & Tae (with director TK McKamy) celebrate their Music Video of the Year win for "Girl in a Country Song."



CELEBRITY BALL Steven Tyler with soccer pros Heather O'Reilly (center) and Megan Rapinoe



(Above) **STUCK IN THE MIDDLE** Nobody comes between Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks—except for Keith Urban, in this photo; (below) **PICK PERFECT** Guitarists got some fancy commemorative guitar picks at the 49th annual CMA Awards.



URBAN OUTFITTED

KEITH URBAN is the latest contemporary artist to land an exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. Keith Urban So Far . . . , as the exhibit is titled, opened at the Hall of Fame on Nov. 20 and focuses on Keith's career path to Nashville and eventual country stardom.

The exhibit includes, not surprisingly, a number of guitars, including Keith's

1989 Fender Custom Shop 40th Anniversary Telecaster. Visitors will also peruse song manuscripts, Keith's various industry awards and documents from scrapbooks that Keith kept as a young bloke. In addition, the exhibit recognizes Keith's commitment to music education and local arts. Keith Urban So Far . . . runs through May 2016, so you have plenty of time to catch the display.



MILESTONE OF MUSIC



SAM HUNT celebrated the one-year anniversary of the release of his debut album, *Montevallo*, by giving his fans even more music. *Between the Pines*, which has been digitally re-issued, served as

a blueprint for his debut and includes many of the hit tracks found on *Montevallo*. Sam co-wrote all 15 of the tunes on the "acoustic mixtape" project, which includes his first topper, "Leave the Night On," as well as Sam's renditions of his Kenny Chesney smash "Come Over," Billy Currington's "We Are Tonight" and Keith Urban's "Cop Car."

OHHHHHHH . . . SNAP!

If you're thinking that getting in shape will be on your list of resolutions for next year, then look to **THOMAS RHETT** for inspiration. The young country star has partnered with Snap Fitness 24/7 to be a spokesperson for 2016 and will host special boot camps in select tour markets throughout the year. After you've signed up for that Snap membership, follow Thomas Rhett on Twitter and Facebook for special get-fit challenges.

SNAP
FITNESS 24-7



LYNCH MOB

DUSTIN LYNCH NO. 1 PARTY
"HELL OF A NIGHT" | SOUTH | NASHVILLE



(From left) Zach Crowell, Adam Sanders, Dustin Lynch and Jaron Boyer

DUSTIN LYNCH recently celebrated his second No. 1 hit, "Hell of a Night," in Nashville, experiencing a full-circle moment in his career. The party was held at Nashville's trendy restaurant South to commemorate the song and its three writers—Zach Crowell, Adam Sanders and Jaron Boyer—who were all present. The locale was the very first place Dustin played a full-band show when making his move to Nashville.

"We played right back there in that corner," Dustin said to the crowd, pointing across the room of the bar that was formerly called Two Doors Down. "It's been really neat to see this village and this team build during this time, so thank you all for believing in me and taking me from that corner to this corner [of this bar]."

New to the No. 1 club was Jaron Boyer, as "Hell of a Night" marked his very first chart-topping single. While it wasn't Adam Sanders' first No. 1, it was a new experience for the writer to attend a gathering celebrating a song topping the charts. After thanking publishers and key people for helping him get a foothold in the writing community, Adam turned to his friend standing beside him with a heartfelt message. "I really want to make this day about Jaron," said Adam, who scored his first No. 1 with Cole Swindell's "Ain't Worth the Whiskey." "You only get one [first No. 1], so it's just super-special to share this kind of thing with your friend. For this to be our first hit together is something that is very special to me."

Many of the country music industry's hottest songwriters filled the room to support their friends, including Ashley Gorley, Josh Kear, Phil Barton, Lindsay Rimes and Michael Tyler, as well as LOCASH's Preston Brust, who used to be roommates with Jaron.

DECK THE HALL ... OF FAME

Christmas is coming to the **COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM** and you should be, too! On November 27, the Hall will kick off its holiday season with the lighting of its 30-foot-tall Christmas tree. Performances from pop and country legend **BRENDA LEE**, **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS** and **T. GRAHAM BROWN** will be peppered across an event-filled month that also includes puppet shows, cookie decorating—with cookies made from **TRISHA YEARWOOD**'s recipe—and, of course, visits from the jolly old elf himself, Santa Claus. For details and schedules, check out the Hall of Fame's website.



"The last good novel I read was **SEVENEVES** [by Neal Stephenson]. It's about space, and I'm a space freak. I've got quite a few more books that I want to get to. There's a new book by Jonathan Franzen [*Purity*] that just came out that I've got to pick up and read. I also just got a book from one of my friends, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son*, which he wrote to his son when he was going away to college in the Colonies in the 1700s that's on my list."



CHARLIE'S BIRTHDAY BASH

CHARLIE DANIELS celebrated his 79th birthday with a gala bash at the Palm restaurant in Nashville on Oct. 27. But he wasn't the one receiving the gifts. The real recipients were the men and women who have served in our nation's military. Charlie took the occasion of his birthday (actually, Oct. 28) to team up with the Nashville music industry to raise funds for the Journey Home Project, an organization he co-founded last year. The Journey Home Project helps military veterans and their families meet health, educational and other needs upon their return to civilian life. "Our mission is to provide a soft landing for our men and women when they come home from the service," Charlie told *Nash Country Weekly* prior to the party. "We try to help them transition back into civilian life, which is not nearly as simple a task as we might think."

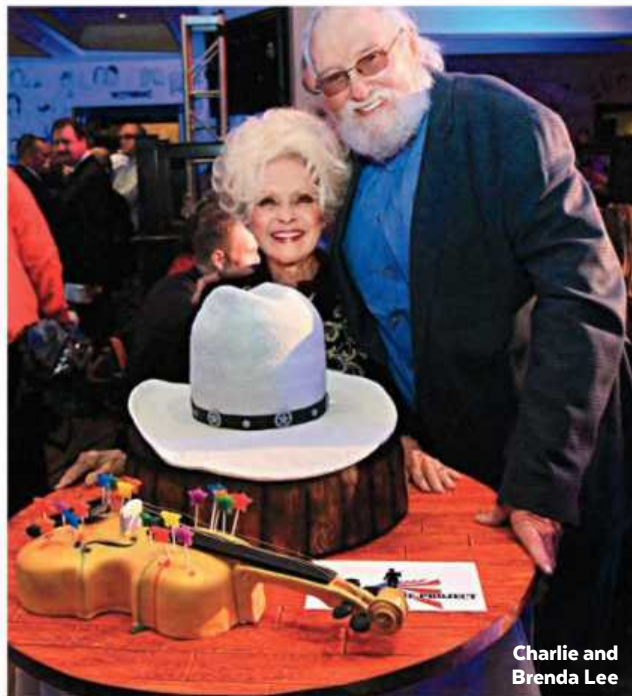
Chris Young, the special guest for the evening, performed his 2014 single "Lonely Eyes" for the attendees.

Chris, a good friend of Charlie, jumped at the chance to appear at the fundraiser. "I have been overseas to visit our military many times and this is a way to give back to them," Chris noted. "What Charlie has done with the Journey Home Project is just amazing."

The evening included a rousing celebratory moment in Charlie's honor. Charlie's friend **BRENDA LEE** led everyone in a serenade of "Happy

Birthday" as a cake topped with one of Charlie's signature white hats was wheeled out to the dining area.

Funds were also raised for the Journey Home Project through both silent and live auctions. Attendees had the opportunity to bid on such items as autographed photos, a trip to The Masters golf tournament and vacation packages.



Charlie and Brenda Lee



Chris Young (left) and Kevin Collier



Charlie and Chris



MORE STRAIT DATES

GEORGE STRAIT has heard the call of the fans. Country's all-time King is adding even more dates for his series of shows at the new Las Vegas Arena, due to, as they say, popular demand. In September, George announced the first two blocks of dates for his Las Vegas shows beginning in April 2016. But tickets were snapped up so rapidly that he booked shows for Dec. 2 and 3. Now, George has committed two more dates for Feb. 17 and 18—of 2017! And don't be surprised if he has to put more on the docket. "I've missed stepping out on that stage and playing that first note," George recently noted. "I'd be lying if I said it didn't feel good to know that the fans have missed me, too." That's perhaps the understatement of the year. George had announced that he will not tour extensively, but is open to playing occasional shows. The Las Vegas Arena gigs have afforded him that golden opportunity.



OUT WITH A BANG

When **AARON TIPPIN** celebrates 25 years of making music, he does it with a bang—literally. Aaron has teamed up with America Remembers to release a limited edition of their

Aaron Tippin Colt .45 pistol, complete with gold-engraved plates displaying the things that mean the most to the singer: his South Carolina roots, music and America. The pistol will be available for purchase for \$1,995 beginning on Dec. 1 exclusively through americaremembers.com.



JOE NICHOLS



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A little **POP** of **COLOR**

GLAM WAS MOST DEFINITELY on display at this year's CMA Awards red carpet in Nashville, but so was color and texture—for both women and men. The ladies seemed to lean away from rhinestones and sequins and more toward vivid reds, soft lilac and Cam's signature yellow for their gowns, while the gentlemen's jackets featured embellishments, stripes and trendy jacquards. Even those in classic black found a way to add a dash of color, like Miranda's ombre pink hair, or a flash of leg, like Kimberly Perry's innovative dress. And those who did opt for a little sparkle on their frock seemed to outshine their attire with a dazzling smile.



**Kelsea
Ballerini**

**Scotty
McCreery**

**Jennifer
Nettles**

**Sam
Hunt**



Rascal Flatts

**Jay
DeMarcus**

**Gary
LeVox**

**Joe Don
Rooney**

**Miranda
Lambert**

**Dierks
Bentley**

**Maddie
& Tae**



**Lady
Antebellum's
Hillary Scott**

**Danielle
Bradbery**

**Brothers
Osborne**

**John
Osborne**

**T.J.
Osborne**

**Lauren
Alaina**

**Darius
Rucker**

**Little Big
Town's
Kimberly
Schlapman**

**Kellie
Pickler**

**Neil
Perry**

The Band Perry

**Kimberly
Perry**

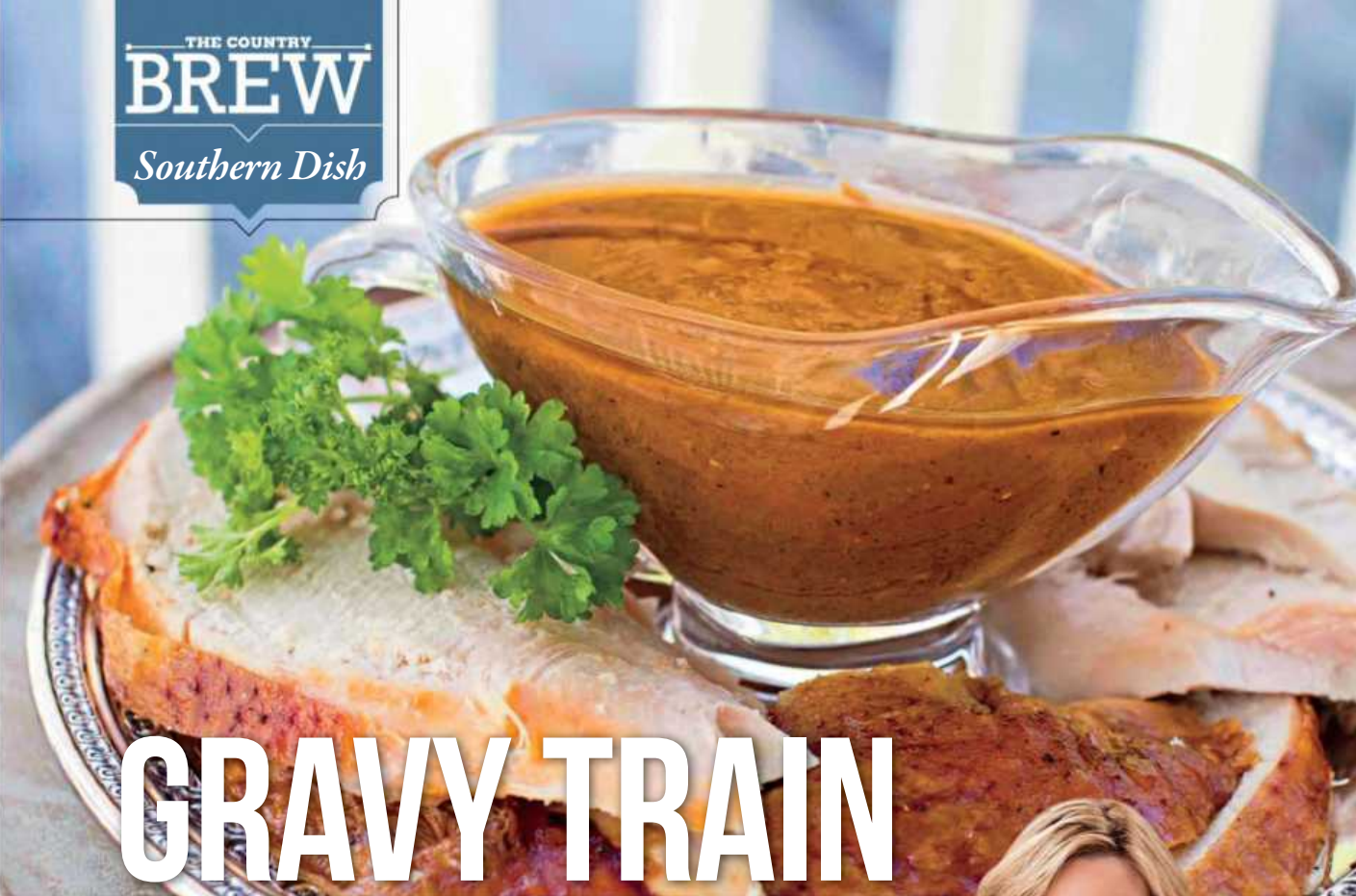
**Reid
Perry**

Cam

**Jason
Aldean**

**Carrie
Underwood**

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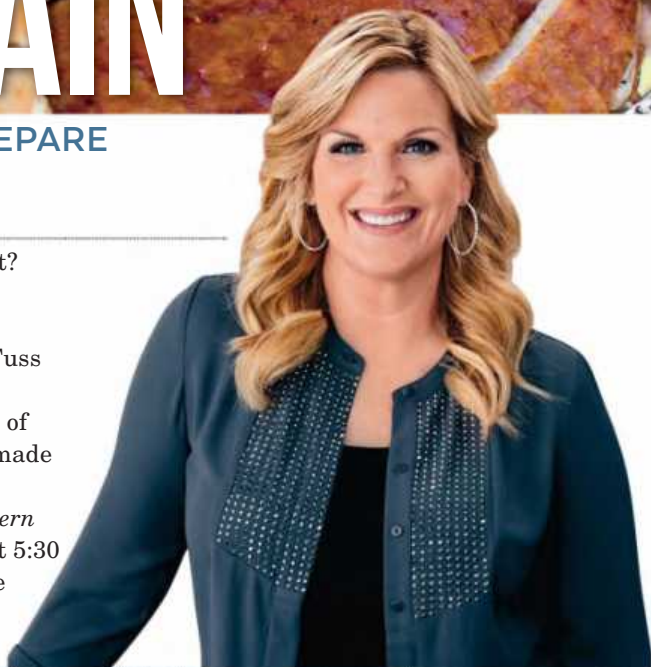
GRAVY TRAIN

TRISHA YEARWOOD HELPS YOU PREPARE YOUR THANKSGIVING DINNER ON HER FOOD NETWORK SHOW.

Still in a panic over your upcoming Thanksgiving feast? Not to worry, as **TRISHA YEARWOOD** is here to help you save the day. On the Thanksgiving episode of her Food Network series *Trisha's Southern Kitchen*, titled "No Fuss Thanksgiving," the multitasking singer and cookbook author guides you through the preparation of a couple of side dishes along with sweet potato pie and her homemade turkey gravy, which you'll find right here.

The "No Fuss Thanksgiving" episode of *Trisha's Southern Kitchen* airs on Nov. 21 at 8:30 a.m. ET and on Nov. 24 at 5:30 p.m. ET on Food Network. And remember, we'll celebrate Thanksgiving on Thursday, Nov. 26. Happy feasting!

BOB PAXMAN



Trisha by Ray Kachorian/The Food Network; food by Matthew Mead/AP

TRISHA YEARWOOD'S TURKEY GRAVY

2 cups pan juices from the turkey-roasting pan

4 tbsp. fat skimmed from pan juices

4 tbsp. all purpose flour

¼ cup shredded white meat from your roast turkey

2 large eggs, hard-boiled, peeled and chopped fine

Salt

POUR the pan juices from your turkey-roasting pan into a measuring cup. **SKIM** and reserve the fat; you'll need 4 tbsp. total. If the remaining turkey juice comes to less than 2 cups, top off with chicken stock.

MIX the flour with the skimmed fat in medium saucepan. **COOK** over medium heat until the roux is lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Slowly **WHISK** the pan juices into the roux and cook until the gravy thickens. **STIR** in the shredded turkey meat and chopped eggs. **ADD** salt to taste.

From *Georgia Cooking in an Oklahoma Kitchen* by Trisha Yearwood © Clarkson Potter 2008.

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Albums

Chris Young

I'm Comin' Over

RCA NASHVILLE

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Though he's a smoldering balladeer stuck in a world that values ephemeral party jams, Chris Young has defied the odds to become one of country's most consistent, relatable voices. On his fifth album, *I'm Comin' Over*, Chris has his typical comfort zones but pushes himself to try new things and mostly meets with success.

The lead single and title track is one of those slow-burning, loins-aching tunes that are his bread and butter, and it's a perfect vehicle for his robust baritone. "Think of You," a duet with Cassadee Pope, is a clear standout—the nicely matched pair trades lines about a couple who were the

life of the party and whose breakup has left their circle of friends struggling to cope with the absence.

In the same vein, Chris effectively and efficiently slays his heartbreak ballads like "I Know a Guy" and the Vince Gill guest spot "Sober Saturday Night"—there may not be another country singer who can so naturally exude abiding sorrow and pent-up lust simultaneously.

But it's also intriguing to hear him try out more contemporary digs, as on the up-tempo, optimistic album opener "Heartbeat." Love is still his primary concern, and building a rhythm-heavy song around the idea of an elevated pulse is a smart concept that pays off.

On the other hand, "You Do the Talkin'" has similar contemporary production touches, but comes off feel-

ing like a pretty transparent attempt to woo radio. Near the album's conclusion, "Underdogs" just feels out of place—an attitude-heavy rocker about overcoming obstacles, it's a jarring listen between the more subtle numbers.

But on the whole, *I'm Comin' Over* puts Chris in full command of his most mature set of songs yet—right where he should be.

JON FREEMAN



THE NCW JUKEBOX

10 essential songs
featured during the
49th annual CMA
Awards show.

**CHRIS
STAPLETON**
"Tennessee
Whiskey"

ERIC CHURCH
"Mr. Misunderstood"

**MIRANDA
LAMBERT**
"Bathroom Sink"

BLAKE SHELTON
"Gonna"

SAM HUNT
"Take Your Time"

**LITTLE BIG
TOWN**
"Girl Crush"

**CARRIE
UNDERWOOD**
"Smoke Break"

**FLORIDA
GEORGIA LINE**
"Confession"

**ZAC BROWN
BAND**
"Beautiful Drug"

THOMAS RHETT
"Crash and Burn"

LOOK
FOR THIS
NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY
PLAYLIST ON
rdio



LOCASH
I Love This Life
REVIVER RECORDS

B+

If you've ever met LOCASH's Chris Lucas and Preston Brust, you know they're two of the most likeable guys in country music, and that's almost reason enough to give a thumbs-up to their new EP, *I Love This Life*. But another great reason is that it's just that good.

There's a great energy to *I Love This Life* that makes the title track the perfect introduction to the rest of the album. Aside from the collection's lone ballad, the dark and impeccably produced "Shipwrecked," the album's tempo is consistently upbeat and song themes are predominantly fun, especially the "Drunk Drunk," which should inspire dreams of drinking a dressed Corona or 10 at a tiki hut bar, sticky from rum shots. (Or maybe that's just me.)

In keeping with most of the rest of what is on country radio these days, there are plenty of the obligatory canned handclaps, effect-laden vocals and whoa-oh-ohs, but I'll be danged if there also isn't a generous helping of banjo on multiple tracks. In fact, the project's closer, "Till the Wheels Fall Off," is so full of the tinkling 5-string, you half-way expect to hear the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band chime in on the chorus. That's country, y'all. And, honestly, when the songs are this well written, it's easy to overlook a little studio sleight of hand and make the choice to clap and sing along. **TAMMY RAGUSA**

Singles



Justin Moore
"You Look Like I Need a Drink"
THE VALORY MUSIC CO.

B

On the lead single from his upcoming fourth album, Justin Moore flips the script on the traditional tear-filled breakup song with an upbeat, bar-rocking anthem that's primed to become a fan-favorite at his live shows. During the first-person narrative, Justin is on the wrong end of an imminent dumping, but it seems like he'd prefer his soon-to-be-ex to stop beating around the bush and pull the Band-Aid right off so he can go get a drink to numb the pain—and, most likely, find her replacement. Justin's natural twang, coupled with the mid-tempo production, masks the forlorn lyrics enough to come out of the song feeling thirsty for more. For that, Justin deserves a double shot of his drink of choice. **JIM CASEY**



Brett Eldredge
"Drunk on Your Love"
ATLANTIC RECORDS

A

This should have everything going against it. Mainly, you've got a familiar, and somewhat overcooked, theme of the natural high that elevates you when you're hopelessly in love. But as they say, it's all in how you do it. There's a breezy, island-y sort of feel going on here, a bit similar to Brett's earlier hit "Beat of the Music," but without sounding like a blatant rehash. And Brett's soulful vocal brims with a romantic sincerity that should have female listeners swaying to every word. He's become one of our finest singers, a guy who knows how to interpret the emotion and nuance required of each individual song he does. With "Drunk on Your Love," Brett gets the chance to work with an amazingly catchy chorus and a pleasing production that lays on some nice sonic touches. Look for Brett to add to his cache of No. 1 hits. **BOB PAXMAN**

SOUTHERN SENSIBILITIES

SCOTTY McCREERY
TAKES US BEHIND
THE SCENES OF
HIS NEW VIDEO,
"SOUTHERN BELLE."



Scotty (left)
watches with direc-
tor Roman White
as a scene is shot
for his "Southern
Belle" video.





Scotty filled his video set with members of the Vanderbilt University Marching Band as well as cheerleading squads from nearby universities Belmont and Lipscomb.



Scotty McCreery may be taking a little break from his college studies to focus on new music right now, but he hit the books—or at least he *looks* like he did—for the video representing his current single, “Southern Belle.” Shooting in Nashville, Scotty enlisted local Belmont University and Lipscomb University cheerleaders and Vanderbilt University’s marching band for the new video.

“It was fun to come out here and do it locally,” says the 22-year-old. “It was a bunch of kids my own age, and that’s a pretty rare thing for me in the work that I do. There’s not really anybody my age in the business, so I had fun. It wasn’t far out of my comfort zone at all.”

In fact, using college cheerleaders was Scotty’s idea. He explains, “I’ve been living in college for the last two years, so we decided to take that element of my life and put it in the video and then showcase the talents of some Southern belles, some cheerleaders. It’s crazy to me to see those cheerleaders flipping and twirling and spinning. It’s crazy what they can do. So, we’re showcasing their strength. I was an athlete in high school, but those girls are athletes, too. Anybody that says that cheerleading isn’t a sport is out of his mind. That takes some strength and athleticism.”

It’s been fun to hear and watch Scotty grow up in his songs and videos, and “Southern Belle” has a decidedly more mature feel than his 2011 debut single, “I Love You This Big.” That poses a very fun question: As he gets older, will Scotty ever become Scott?

“I’ve always been a Scotty,” he says with a smile. “It would be weird to have a John Cash, a Ken Rogers, Ken Chesney—they always stuck with the ‘Y’ there. For now, it’s going to continue to be Scotty, but down the road, who knows? Life changes. I’ve always been Scotty, that’s all I’ve known, so that’s kind of the plan.”

But surely, someone in his family has called him by his given name.

He laughs heartily and confirms, “When they’re mad at me. With my middle name: ‘Scott Cooke McCreery, you better come downstairs *right now!*’ I’ve heard that quite a few times. Sure have.”

TAMMY RAGUSA

KRISTIAN BUSH

FIRST MUSIC TEACHER

Mrs. Starr at the University of Tennessee Suzuki Violin Program in 1973.

FIRST KISS

It happened in the fourth grade with a girl named Julie after swim practice—it was innocent.

FIRST TIME YOU LEFT HOME

1983. I was 13 and I spent six months in South Africa with a friend and his family.

FIRST STREET YOU LIVED ON

Route 4 in Sevierville, Tennessee.

FIRST CONCERT

The Police on their Synchronicity Tour in 1984 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

FIRST DATE

Her name was Mary. I took her to see *Halloween II* and I hoped it would be scary enough that she would want to sit in my lap.

FIRST TIME YOU HEARD YOURSELF ON THE RADIO

1990, Atlanta, Georgia. WRAS Album 88, a college station. They played my song "Too Many People" and I almost drove off the road.

FIRST SONG YOU LEARNED TO PLAY ON GUITAR

"You Really Got Me" by The Kinks-slash-Van Halen.

FIRST CAR

A white Datsun pickup truck.

FIRST DRINK

I wasn't old enough, maybe we shouldn't talk about it.

FIRST TATTOO

Only tattoo. Left forearm, the word "hope."



photo by David McClister/Songs of the Architect

COMING *FULL CIRCLE*

LORETTA LYNN last released an original studio album in 2004, the acclaimed and award-winning *Van Lear Rose*. But now, 12 years later, Loretta is giving fans a new album titled *Full Circle*, set to be released on March 4, 2016.

The album promises to live up to the title, as it takes listeners through



Loretta's musical journey with a track list that spans traditional Appalachian tunes from her childhood,

fresh renditions of Loretta's classics and brand-new material. *Full Circle* also features Loretta's duets with Willie Nelson on "Lay Me Down" and Elvis Costello on "Everything It Takes."

To coincide with the album, PBS will air *American Masters—Loretta Lynn: Still a Mountain Girl*, a

documentary on Loretta's life and career, on March 4, 2016, the day of the release. The film will explore Loretta's hard-fought road from poverty to country stardom.

Full Circle was produced by Loretta's daughter Patsy Lynn Russell and John Carter Cash. The album is available for pre-order at Amazon Music.



A photograph of the three members of Rascal Flatts standing in a grassy field. On the left, Gary LeVox is leaning on a wooden fence, wearing a light-colored polo shirt. In the center, Jay DeMarcus is standing with his hand on his hip, wearing a grey t-shirt. On the right, Joe Don Rooney is leaning against the open door of a light blue vintage car, wearing a brown leather jacket over a dark shirt and light-colored pants. The background shows a green field and a line of trees.

TOP PRIORITIES

RASCAL FLATTS'
NEW SINGLE POINTS
TO WHO THEY HAVE
BECOME—AND
WHAT THEY HAVEN'T
CHANGED SINCE
THEY ARRIVED.

BY TRICIA DESPRES

Mere hours before Rascal Flatts took the stage for its Riot Tour 2015, members Gary LeVox, Jay DeMarcus and Joe Don Rooney were chatting with their fans online when Jay made a statement that sent fans into an uproar.

"I will tell you exactly what happened there," Jay tells *Nash Country Weekly* after the fact, seated in a dressing room near the stage of the Chicago venue at which he and his Rascal Flatts partners are performing. "We were on [Twitter live stream] Meerkat one night and just to get people talking, I threw out the

idea of us doing a farewell tour . . . and everyone kind of panicked."

"Yeah, kinda like Gary and I," Joe Don Rooney quickly quips back.

Whether it was a misunderstanding, mistake or a massive misconception of the love that still surrounds Rascal Flatts, the reaction did deliver a message that was as loud as it was clear: fans aren't ready to say goodbye.

"On Meerkat, the fans do this



thing called mobbing, and it just started going crazy the minute after Jay mentioned a farewell tour," Joe Don continues. "I mean, it was smoking."

The over-the-top response was for good reason, too, because fans have seen other bands reach some milestone year and make the decision that the time away from home out on the road just might not be worth it anymore. But not for Rascal

Flatts—these three men say they are in it for the long run.

“The plan is to do a farewell tour in 2035,” says Jay with a laugh. “We will be hitting it hard until then.”

I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT

For now, Rascal Flatts is putting all of its efforts behind its latest single, “I Like the Sound of That.” “Jay had been pounding the pavement in Nashville looking for some up-tempo songs for [our album] *Rewind*,” recalls Joe Don, “and ‘I Like the Sound of That’ was one of the first ones to come in. We were all like, ‘My God, that thing is really fresh and different and cool.’”

The song’s suitability for Rascal Flatts made perfect sense, considering that Dan + Shay’s Shay Mooney was a co-writer on the song. “Shay is a dear friend of ours, and he makes no bones about the fact that he grew up loving Gary [LeVox] so much and singing to [Rascal Flatts records] as a kid,” Jay explains of the song, which was co-written by Jesse Frasure and “All About That Bass” singer Meghan Trainor. “So when we get this demo with Shay’s vocal on it, it just really painted such a good picture of what the tempo should be for Gary. It just sounded like a Gary song and I couldn’t wait for him to sink his teeth into it.”

“I Like the Sound of That” marks the fourth single off the *Rewind* album, which in music-industry terminology usually means that it’s time to say goodbye to one’s current body of work and get ready to produce the next one. Gary admits that part is a downright bummer.

“I think we have felt that way on every album our entire career,” Gary says, sitting up a bit straighter on the dressing room couch. “We’ve left some true, giant gems on all of our records. Even if they weren’t right for radio, there are always ones you wished you could have gotten to and you never do. You just hate that they don’t get to see the light of day.”



And while there is no specific timetable for a new record, the guys say they are writing a bunch at the moment. “We have a song called ‘I’m Moving On Again,’ which is kind of a reprise of ‘I’m Movin’ On,’” Jay jokes of the song first featured on Rascal Flatts’ 2001 self-titled debut album.

“But this one has a ‘g’ on ‘Movin’,” Gary chimes in quickly, as all three laugh.

FAMILY DEALINGS

Their laughter has long bonded the three men throughout their 15-year career, which has yielded 15 No. 1 songs and more than 22.8 million albums sold. That laughter has also catapulted the three through home lives that now include houses filled with kids who are growing up much too fast for their dads’ liking.

Take, for example, Gary’s now-15-year-old daughter, Brittany. “It’s weird because it’s like I talk to her like I talk to my wife,” Gary explains. “We talk about the same type of things. I mean, I think to myself that we can’t be on the same level, ya know?”

It was that same Brittany who was just a baby when Rascal Flatts hit it big with songs such as “I’m Movin’ On” and “Prayin’ for Daylight.” “I can’t say enough how

much more adoration I have for Gary now having gone through the early years of our career having kids early on,” says Jay, who now has two children of his own waiting for him back in Nashville. “I don’t know how [Gary] did it because it kills me to leave for just three days now. Back in the day, we were gone weeks on end sometimes.”

He sighs.

“I think having kids has made us better human beings and we cherish what we have a little bit more,” Jay continues, referring also to Joe Don’s brood of three children back in Nashville. “You hear all the time that you don’t know until you live through it and that’s really the truth. It’s amazing what different lenses you put on your eyes when you have kids in the world. It has ended up impacting every aspect of the music we create.”

So that’s what they do—create music and move on with their lives.

No longer is it simply about the No. 1 songs and the career milestones they still would love to reach, but rather a future that looks as bright personally as it does professionally. “It’s amazing, the life we are leading,” Joe Don concludes. “It’s cool to know that the future is going to get that much brighter.” **NCW**

SOMETHING TO HAW ABOUT

BRANDY CLARK AND SHANE McANALLY TALK ABOUT THE MAKING OF **MOONSHINE: THAT HEE HAW MUSICAL** AND ITS SUCCESSFUL RUN IN DALLAS.



As *Moonshine: That Hee Haw Musical* ended its initial run in Dallas in October, *Nash Country Weekly* got the chance to chat with Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally, the award-winning country music songwriters—Brandy is also an award-winning singer, Shane is also an award-winning producer—who stepped out of their comfort zones to write the music and lyrics for the new musical comedy.

When you were approached in 2013 to come on board as writers for the musical, were you tentative or did you jump at the opportunity?

BRANDY CLARK: I jumped at it. For me, it was always a life goal to write a musical. I didn't think it would come around when it did, but I felt like it was something I had to do. I thought, "I can't not do this." Also, at the time, it didn't seem like such a huge undertaking because I didn't know how far we were going to dive in. One of the great things about Steve Buchanan [Opry Entertainment president, who produced the musical] is he really expedited the process for us. He wanted a first draft within six months. So we had to do it fast. When you're expected to do things, you just do them.

SHANE McANALLY: I was tentative. Initially it didn't sound like the best idea. At the time, we were both gearing up in our respective careers, as well as things we had going together, so to then step away from that and have to invest so much time in something like this, it just didn't seem like a great investment for us at the time. What ultimately led us to do it was a call from Steve, who was familiar with the work Brandy and I had done together. I'm so glad somebody knew better than me. It's been such an amazing creative process. I wouldn't have wanted to take on a task like this by myself, but when you have a teammate like Brandy—she and I are able to pick up where the other one left off to get us across the finish line. We really

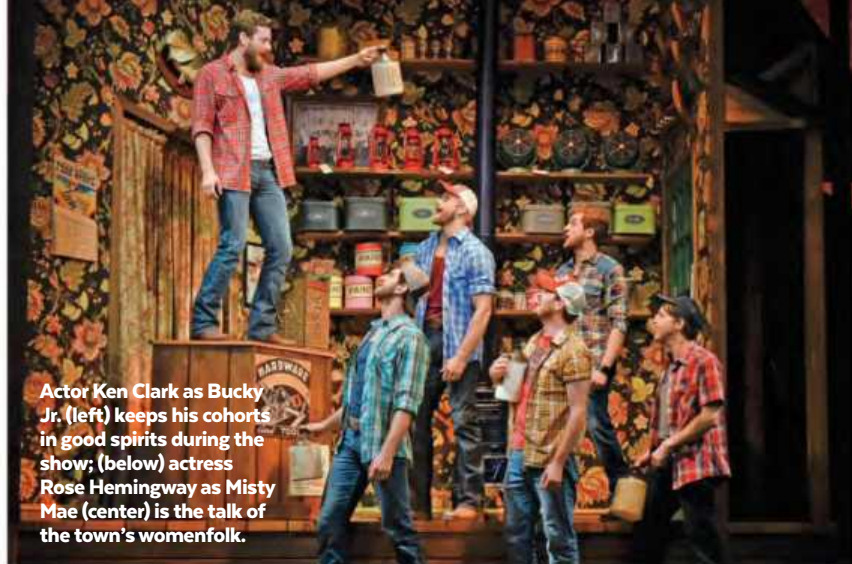
trust each other and feel safe in that regard. So the idea of doing a project together like this, it really sounded fun. Plus, it was *Hee Haw*, and we both had a really nostalgic connection to the show.

Brandy mentioned that writing a musical was a bucket list item for her. What about you, Shane?

SM: For sure, but not for my whole life. Brandy had a lot more theater background than me, as far as knowing musicals. A few years ago, I saw *The Book of Mormon* in New York. I was sitting in the audience on Broadway, and when that show was over, I looked at my partner and said, "I want to do that." I didn't even know what that meant. I just knew somehow, what I felt in that moment, I wanted to make people feel.

What was the biggest difference between writing a country song and writing a country musical?

BC: I think in this musical, we can get



Actor Ken Clark as Bucky Jr. (left) keeps his cohorts in good spirits during the show; (below) actress Rose Hemingway as Misty Mae (center) is the talk of the town's womenfolk.



(Above) Bucky Jr. and Misty Mae; (below, clockwise from top left) Moonshine co-writers Shane McAnally and Brandy Clark, book author Robert Horn and director Gary Griffin.



away with saying a lot more. We have all kinds of sexual innuendos in our songs. Some of it, there's no way you could say it on country radio.

SM: And one of the big things in the country radio world we live in and write for every day, we have to tell the whole story in three minutes. This is really the opposite of that. Probably the biggest hurdle for us to get over was not telling too much of the story with each song.

Typically in musicals, you write, rewrite and rewrite the rewrite. Have you found that to be the case?

BC: Oh, yeah. We still have a lot of that to go. At some point, we had to stop for the Dallas shows because the show opened and the actors can't rehearse anymore after that. When you start to see it in front of an audience, you see what really plays and what doesn't. Someone told me early on that great musicals aren't written, they're rewritten. And I'm definitely seeing that.

SM: We'll be continuing to do those things. I don't think we're done. The writing and rewriting is an ongoing process. It's very rare for Brandy and I to write a song and go back to it—I'm talking for country radio—but that part of it is ongoing. When we started, we sort of had the naiveté of not knowing what we were getting into. We were a little blind at first, but now we're getting used to it. Sometimes the best song doesn't make it because it just doesn't make sense.

Now that you've gotten the chance to watch the show multiple times, what's your take on the crowd reactions?

SM: There's a great relationship between the crowd and the actors. They can really feed each other. You can go on any given night and have a completely different experience from the night before.

BC: There are some spots where they always laugh. It can be the stuffiest crowd, and there are still a few spots that they have to laugh.

What's been the biggest surprise in this process?

BC: For me—because it's the element I know least about—it was when dance got brought into the show, how much it moved me emotionally. The first time Shane and I saw the opening number with choreography, we both teared up. I didn't know. It's a fun opening number, I just underestimated what dance can do. I knew I could be moved by songs and scenes, but I didn't realize that dance would do the same thing.

What are you most proud of?

SM: I feel a great sense of pride because of the team effort of it. In Nashville, we have a lot of teams around us, and it takes a lot of work to get a song to country radio, but it still feels like we celebrate our individual success. This musical is such a real team. Every part of it is a cog in a wheel. It's so fulfilling in that regard because it's so much more fun winning as a team than by yourself.

JIM CASEY



Home for the Holidays

KELLIE PICKLER
REVEALS THE NEW
ADDITIONS TO HER
SELMA DRYE HOME
GOODS COLLECTION
IN THE COMFORT OF
HER COZY ABODE.

BY TAMMY RAGUSA

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY HYLBERT



The stockings are hung by the chimney with care . . . just in time for Kyle and Kellie to share a cup of good cheer.



IT'S CHRISTMASTIME in the Nashville home that Kellie Pickler shares with husband and *I Love Kellie Pickler* co-star Kyle Jacobs. A tall, sturdy pine stands in the corner trimmed in chic, rustic ornaments and white lights, while the beautifully wrapped packages underneath are begging to be opened. Kellie is nearby, beaming more brightly than the star atop the tree as she shows off various pieces from her Selma Drye holiday line, inspired by her own great-grandmother—yes, named Selma Drye.

"It's exciting to finally get to Christmas and the holidays," she says, smiling. "We didn't know if the



Kellie gets a jump-start on her Christmas gift-giving by wrapping pieces from her Selma Drye collection, like the holiday themed dishes (below left), which are perfect for Santa's cookies, and the charming, rustic ornaments (below right).



line would do well when we first launched it, so we didn't know if we'd even be doing a spring, then a summer, then a Christmas line. It's really fun, though."

Part of what makes it fun for Kellie is collaborating with Kim O'Dell, who works with the Grand Ole Opry's retail division. "I've been really blessed to work with Kim. She really helped me put my ideas and thoughts into reality, into a tangible form with the Selma Drye line," Kellie says.

The feeling is apparently mutual. Kim, who heads the team that turns Kellie's dreams into a reality, chimes in. "She really is a dream to

work with because it really comes from her heart," says Kim. "What we wanted when we started down this path was for it to be authentic. So, you can see that she does this for herself to begin with, but then beyond that, it really is pieces that mean something to her, which is very different than a lot of artist collections out there who really allow someone else to pull the line together and put their name on it. She has a strong vision of keeping true to the feel of representing her grandmother and her roots and her upbringing."

One goal the pair has is to create a mix-and-match collection in



The Selma Drye line mixes warm and rustic woods with shimmery, brightly colored Mercury glass and elements of Kellie's North Carolina home, like the dogwood cross ornament (below right).



Whether in Tennessee or North Carolina, Georgia or Texas, New York or California, coffee mugs adorned with lyrics from "My Christmas Caroline" (below), make any place feel like home.



KELLIE PICKLER CONTINUED

which new pieces from each season coordinate with others. "You can mix the colors and it all goes together and that makes it easier to add little touches here and there, little what-nots," Kellie explains.

Another goal is to launch a collectible element to the line. Kellie already has an idea in mind that begins with a brand-new item. "I'm really excited about the snow globe because we were able to marry both my love for this line and my love of music," she says. "I recorded a Christmas song that Kyle and I wrote called 'My Christmas Caroline,'

and it's about North Carolina and what Christmas was like growing up with my grandma. We put that in the snow globe and it has Carolina pine trees in it with the snow. Depending on how well they do, we might make that a collector's item, a different snow globe every year."

Kellie's rural roots are evident in the collection's homey and practical nature. But she got validation when she took a few samples back to North Carolina. "I was home this weekend visiting with my grandmother Faye's sisters [and] my great aunts, and taking them pieces from the line and seeing how excited they are about it and

how much they love it. When they say, 'Oh, this is Mama,' meaning Selma, my great-grandmother, it's exciting because they remember being raised by my great-grand-mother Selma and having to make do with what they had. It was really special to be able to share this together in their mother's honor and my great-grandmother's honor. And even my grandma Faye's honor. There are things in the Selma Drye line that she inspired. Just being able to make it about family and really capture those sweet memories and moments and bottle that up and create a line inspired by all of that was pretty neat." **NCW**

Granddaughter, I Love You to the Moon

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of "Always in
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globe sparkles with
star-shaped glitter

A loving message in
graceful script adorns
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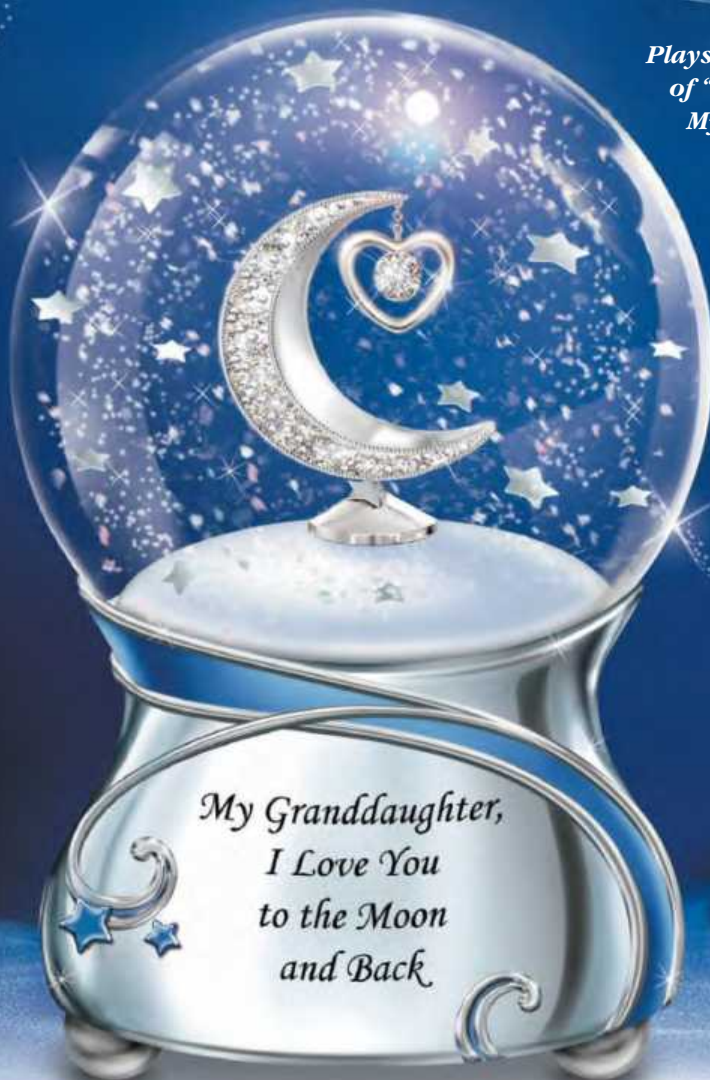
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**The
49th annual
CMA Awards**



THE TRENDSETTER

After 37 years, **CHRIS STAPLETON** is suddenly in style.

STORY BY JIM CASEY

Longhaired and burly-bearded, Chris Stapleton was an imposing presence at first glance as he sat at an unadorned wooden table inside an industrial-styled conference room earlier this spring. The setting was his management company's office space in Nashville's trendy Gulch neighborhood, but there was nothing trendy about Chris... yet. He was cloaked in denim and sporting a trucker's ball cap. His beard, which he appeared to have been growing since kindergarten, masked his face so completely that he could have been smiling or scowling without anyone being the wiser. This was seven months ago, as Chris prepared for the May release of his debut solo album, *Traveller*. It turned out Chris was smiling.

During the hour-long conversation, the soft-spoken, 37-year-old Kentucky native talked about his musical journey since moving to Nashville in 2001—from writing No. 1 songs for the likes of Darius Rucker and Kenny Chesney to fronting the Grammy-nominated bluegrass troupe The SteelDrivers. All the while, Chris—who can effortlessly turn his soulful voice up to an 11 onstage—was stoic and modest when it came to conversing about his talents. His eyes, however, lit up when the topic wandered to the 14 songs featured on his debut project. It was the songwriter inside of him manifesting itself via a glimmer. After all, he penned or co-penned 12 of the 14 tunes.

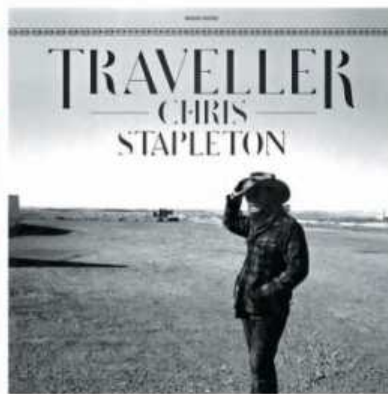
But it turned out that the track Chris talked about most was one of the two he didn't write—more specifically, "Tennessee Whiskey," a song Dean Dillon and Linda Hargrove co-penned that was originally recorded by David Allan Coe in 1981, two years before George Jones put his pipes on it and took it to No. 2 on the *Billboard* Hot Country Singles chart.

"'Tennessee Whiskey,'" said Chris, then taking a long, deliberate pause. "As a songwriter, if you can write just one of those, that's it. But [as a singer] you're not going to out-David-Allan-Coe David Allan Coe or out-George-Jones George Jones. That's just a fact. That song was kind of a happy accident. The guys [in my band] were kinda playing this old groove one time. It was in Charlottesville, Virginia—I remember it well. We were

getting ready to do soundcheck and the guys started playing this old groove. I was walking around thinking, 'What can I sing over the top of this?' I started singing 'Tennessee Whiskey.' It sounded so fun and good that I was like, 'Hey, let's just play this tonight.' So we played it that night and the next night and we've been playing it ever since. We hadn't necessarily planned on recording it on the album, but once again we just followed it where it went. We started goofing around in the studio by playing it and [mixing engineer] Vance Powell had the presence of mind to turn the red on and producer Dave Cobb [see sidebar] said, 'Yeah, let's record this now.'"



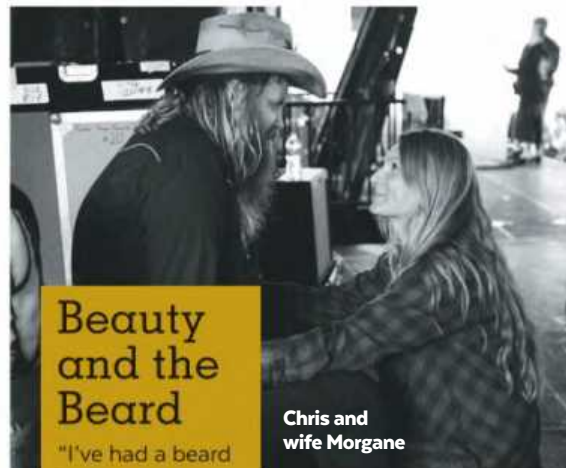
Fast-forward seven months after our initial conversation to the CMA Awards show on Nov. 4, when Chris teamed with Justin Timberlake for a sizzling duet on "Tennessee Whiskey." It's not hyperbole to say that Chris out-David-Allan-Coe'd David Allan Coe and he out-George-Jones'd George Jones. Chris and Justin's duet was one of the most electrifying collaborations in the CMA Awards show's 49-year history, ranking right up there with the cross-genre alliance of Alabama and Lionel Richie on "Deep River Woman" in 1986, among others.



(Above from left) Chris accepts the 2015 CMA Male Vocalist of the Year award from presenters Lee Ann Womack and Kiefer Sutherland; album art for *Traveller*; Miranda Lambert's shirt at the CMAs says it all.



After their rip-roaring CMA duet, Chris and Justin Timberlake (right) share a laugh backstage.



Chris and wife Morgane

Beauty and the Beard

"I've had a beard for at least a dozen years," says Chris. "My wife has never seen my chin. I had it long before *Duck Dynasty* was a thing or before anyone really went around buying beard products. I was covered in hillbilly facial hair long before it was cool. So yeah, I've been rocking it for a while."

CHRIS STAPLETON CONTINUED

But Chris' remarkable onstage collaboration was just the start of his unprecedented night. By the time the three-hour telecast had concluded, Chris was the CMA New Artist of the Year winner . . . and the CMA Album of the Year winner . . . and the CMA Male Vocalist of the Year winner—a trifecta that had never before been accomplished.

Suddenly, Chris Stapleton was trendy—and trending. More than 13.5 million people watched his CMA Awards show performance on television. Less than a week later, the same performance had chalked up several million YouTube views. On Nov. 4, the name “Chris Stapleton” received more than 2 million Google searches—1.9 million more hits than the next closest person, Sam Hunt. But here's where it becomes truly mind-blowing:

immediately following the CMA Awards, sales of *Traveller* exceeded 153,000 units according to Nielsen Music (177,000 when you add in streaming). To put that into perspective, the album had sold 27,000 units during its first week in May and somewhere around 96,000 units by the end of October. On top of that, “Tennessee Whiskey” became the best-selling digital country song of the week with 131,206 downloads sold.

On the Sunday afternoon following the CMA Awards show—four days removed from his epic night—Chris is relaxing at his Nashville home with his wife, Morgane, and two


children, still trying to catch his breath from his whirlwind week. During this impromptu sit-down, Chris appears to be the same guy he was seven months prior—longhaired, burly-bearded, stoic, modest and soft-spoken. The music-loving world may have changed around him, but he hasn't.

In fact, the only time Chris gets overly excited is when I mention that he may have topped both David Allan Coe

and George Jones with his and Justin's performance of “Tennessee Whiskey” on the CMAs. The statement is akin to blasphemy as far as Chris is concerned.

“Easy now,” says Chris with an

Lee Ann, Kiefer & Chris by Terry Wyatt/Getty Images; Chris & Justin courtesy Justin Timberlake facebook; Miranda & Chris courtesy UMG Nashville; Chris & Morgane courtesy Chris Stapleton facebook



The Cobb Effect

DAVE COBB is one of the most sought-after producers in Nashville right now, and it's not by accident. In addition to producing past albums for the likes of Shooter Jennings, Jamey Johnson and Sturgill Simpson, Dave's 2015 credits include, among others, Chris Stapleton (*Traveller*), A Thousand Horses (*Southernality*), Jason Isbell (*Something More Than Free*) and Corb Lund (*Things That Can't Be Undone*).

"There aren't enough words for me to say how great Dave Cobb is," says Chris. "He is a great player, a great

musical mind, a great song guy, a great spirit, a great producer. He's everything a producer should be, in my mind. I sought him out. He and I share a lot of common influences and things that we love. He brings a little more rock 'n' roll to the table than I do, I'm sure, but we both have these similar musical commonalities. There's something unspoken. He almost knows what I want before I tell him what I want and vice versa. Working with him was one of the best collaborative efforts I've ever had."

uncomfortable laugh. "I'll stand by my previous statement on that. You can't top those guys. We can do our version of what we do and we'll leave it at that."

The declaration is just another example of Chris humbly deflecting the spotlight when it comes shining down on him. With his hat and beard and hair, he seems more comfortable lurking in the shadows than soaking up the limelight. And when he's not deflecting credit, he's even quicker to point it in the direction of the person he feels deserves it. In this instance, that person is the aforementioned Justin Timberlake.

"I've known Justin for a couple of years, and we're friends, and we check in on each other here and there," says Chris. "He's a new dad and I've got two, and we talk about dad stuff and talk about music and things like that on occasion. So

when the nominations came out, I felt like maybe I would have an opportunity for a performance slot, so I called Justin up and asked him if he'd be willing. We've always kinda looked for a reason to do something together, and I asked him if he'd be willing to show up and play on the CMAs and he said, 'Yeah man, just tell me when.' So we took that to the CMAs and asked if they'd be interested in that, and they were accommodating and excited to have him for sure."

It sounds like the CMAs were excited to have Chris, too, not to mention his country music peers, as evidenced by Miranda Lambert sporting a shirt with Chris' moniker on it, as well as Luke Bryan referring to Chris by name in his Entertainer of the Year acceptance speech. While big winners Miranda, Luke and Little Big Town had rea-

sons to smile, the night belonged to Chris Stapleton.

"After winning the third award for Male Vocalist of the Year, I was waiting for a *Candid Camera* moment or thought maybe I was getting *Punk'd*—I was waiting for it to be some sort of national television prank," says Chris. "It didn't seem like a real thing. Sometimes you get to do stuff in this business that when you say it out loud—like playing with Justin on the show—it sounds fake. The whole night sounds like a fake occurrence, something that couldn't possibly happen for someone in my position. But it did, and we're overly thankful and overjoyed right now. If there was ever a perfect night in a career, that was one. What a crazy, wonderful, exciting night."

And just like that, Chris Stapleton is in style. **NCW**

The
49th annual
CMA Awards

PLAY TO



WIN

The best performances
and biggest winners
of the **49th annual
CMA Awards show.**



THE PLAYERS

The 49th annual CMA Awards broadcast was packed full of great performances—not just that one with Chris Stapleton and Justin Timberlake. From collaborations to solo performances with cartoon ponies, here's what it looked like.



Brad Paisley and
Carrie Underwood



Hank Williams Jr.
(left) and Eric Church



Little Big Town



Blake
Shelton



Dierks
Bentley



Kelsea
Ballerini



Brooks & Dunn and
Reba McEntire



**Sam
Hunt**



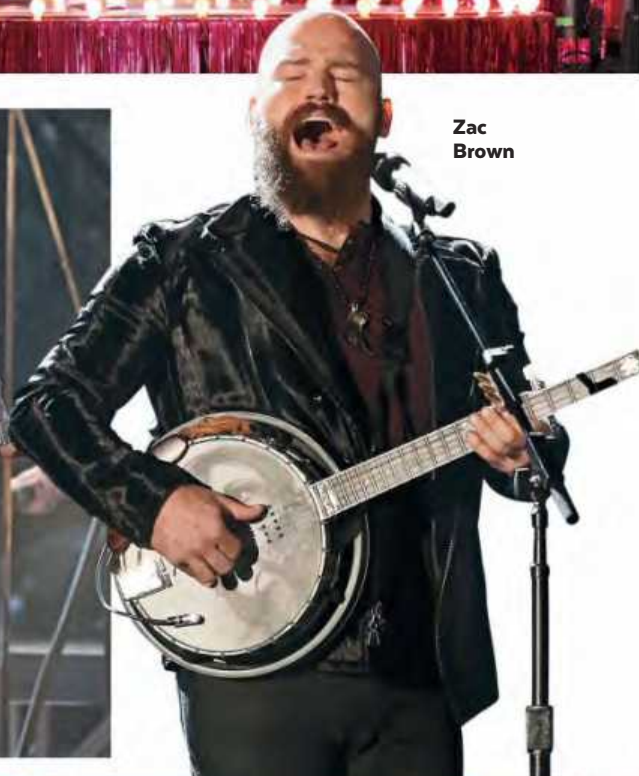
**Kacey
Musgraves**



**Fall Out Boy
(left) and Thomas Rhett**



**Miranda
Lambert**



**Zac
Brown**



**Brad
Paisley**



**Keith Urban
(left) and John
Mellencamp**

THE WINNERS

As much as Chris Stapleton's three wins were something of a pleasant surprise, many familiar—and deserving—faces returned to the CMA Awards stage to collect more hardware for their collection.



Luke Bryan took the night's top prize, Entertainer of the Year, for a second time.



Miranda Lambert won her sixth straight Female Vocalist of the Year award.



Little Big Town was named Vocal Group of the Year and their hit "Girl Crush" won Single of the Year.



Florida Georgia Line continued its winning streak as Vocal Duo of the Year.

Luke, Miranda, LBT and FGL by Curtis Hilbun/AFP; Dave & Chris by Rick Diamond/Getty Images; all other photos by Amee Stubbs

THE WINNERS LIST

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
LUKE BRYAN

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
MIRANDA LAMBERT

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
CHRIS STAPLETON

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR
CHRIS STAPLETON

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR
LITTLE BIG TOWN

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR
FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

ALBUM OF THE YEAR
TRAVELLER
CHRIS STAPLETON

SINGLE OF THE YEAR
"GIRL CRUSH"
LITTLE BIG TOWN

SONG OF THE YEAR
"GIRL CRUSH"
WRITTEN BY LIZ ROSE,
LORI McKENNA,
HILLARY LINDSEY

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR
"RAISE 'EM UP"
ERIC CHURCH
FEAT. KEITH URBAN

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR
"GIRL IN A COUNTRY SONG"
MADDIE & TAE

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR
MAC McANALLY



Producer Dave Cobb (left) celebrated his shared Album of the Year win for Chris Stapleton's *Traveller*.



Pre-telecast honorees included (clockwise from above left) John Carter Cash (on behalf of Johnny Cash), Musician of the Year Mac McAnally, Video of the Year winners Maddie & Tae and Nancy Jones (on behalf of George Jones).





SINGER,
MUSICIAN AND
FORMER *HEE
HAW* HOST
ROY CLARK
STILL LOVES
ENTERTAINING
AUDIENCES.

SPARKLING CONVERSATION

BY BOB PAXMAN

At 82, with a life of sterling career achievements behind him, Roy Clark doesn't have to pick another note or commandeer another stage. And who could blame him if he decided to opt for permanent life on the front porch?

If anyone in the country realm could be termed a "multimedia star," the amiable singer/guitarist fits that bill. He won the CMA Entertainer of the Year honor in 1973, copped Grammy awards for his instrumental prowess, co-hosted the long-running *Hee Haw* variety show and broke international barriers as the first American performer in any genre to play for an audience in Russia. For his numerous musical contributions, Roy was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2009.

Roy still loves to entertain, though he's reached a point in his career where cutting back the schedule has become mandatory. He has some difficulties with mobility and dexterity, the result of hip surgery in 2005 and back surgeries since. He relies mostly on a cane to get around with any facility at all. Spinal pain has also affected his hands and his playing abilities. Yet he manages to perform the occasional concert and still travels, albeit on a limited basis. There has been no hint of full-time retirement.

The familiar, infectious smile is ever-present as Roy takes a seat inside the office of his Nashville publicist. *Hee Haw*'s former producer Sam Lovullo, who often accompanies Roy on his travels, sits across from him. During the mid-afternoon chat, Roy shared stories of his *Hee Haw* days, hanging out at Nashville's venerable Tootsie's Orchid Lounge and the early days of his career. He likes to reprise many of those favorite anecdotes in his series of one-man concerts, *A Conversation With Roy Clark*, which he plans to resume in 2016.

"We've done shows in Texas, Iowa and Oklahoma and other places, and it's been fun," Roy says, shift-



(Clockwise from above) Roy jams with some of his favorite musicians, shares a laugh with comic Jonathan Winters on *Hee Haw* and performs in concert.



ing slightly in his chair. Roy plays only briefly during the *Conversation* shows, sticking mostly to the title aspect and answering questions thrown out by the audience.

"I was apprehensive at first because you're taking my guitar away," Roy says, laughing. "I have to sit there and be halfway intelligent. I've always thought I had an interesting life. But how could I convey that to the audience? So far, they have made me feel very comfortable." Flashing another twinkling smile, Roy adds, "At first, I would think, 'How long is this going to last?' But now, I find myself looking forward to it."

Most of the time in his shows, though, he's looking back. The most obvious questions fans are eager to ask revolve around *Hee Haw*, the country music/comedy series that remains one of the most popular programs in syndicated TV history. Roy was there from the beginning, assuming the role of co-host, initially with Buck Owens, from the time the show

started on CBS in 1969 until its cancellation in 1992. In 1971, CBS axed the show in what came to be known in TV circles as the "rural purge," dropping all of its country-themed shows such as *Green Acres* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*. *Hee Haw* continued in syndication and became a ratings (and advertising) blockbuster, despite the critical brickbats of most reviewers. Buck left in 1986 but Roy stayed on, giving the series a sense of continuity and solidarity.

"The network came to me with the idea for *Hee Haw*," Roy remembers, "and they sounded pretty thorough, like they had done some sort of checking or research. Their idea was a show with lots of comedy and good music. Would I be interested? That was in the fall of 1968, and it turned my career around."

Roy enjoyed his biggest chart hits, including the chart-topping "Come Live With Me," just as *Hee Haw* was catching fire with the viewing public. Prior to *Hee Haw*, he had been known

primarily as an outstanding musician who could also do comedy, evidenced by his frequent guest appearances on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. *Hee Haw* helped establish Roy as a recording star and multifaceted entertainer.

"When the fans ask about *Hee Haw* [in his shows], they want to know what went on behind the scenes," Roy says amiably. "We'll pick that up and tell some stories about when I was there on the set. A lot of them," says Roy, pausing for a warm, nostalgic laugh, "involve Junior Samples. He was great fun—and great material."

Junior, for those not of a certain demographic (age or otherwise), was part of the regular *Hee Haw* cast, an overalls-clad, overweight Southern comic who spoke in a drawl dripping with Southern flavor. He was assumed to be illiterate (he was not) because of his bumbling delivery and the fact that he often blew his lines during comedy sketches.

"There is one story I tell about Junior," Roy says, leaning forward in his chair. "I was doing some one-liners and Junior walked up as I was coming off the stage. I said, 'Junior, man, it's hot in there. It's been a long day.' I told him with the kind of day I was having, I was going to need a drink of hard liquor." That was a somewhat dangerous statement, given that Junior once ran a moonshine still in his home state of Georgia. "He could make moonshine out of anything that would ferment," offers Sam Lovullo.

"They called me again to the stage," Roy continues, "and when I was through, Junior asked me if I was serious about that liquor. I said, 'Well, no, not really.' I'm not that much of a drinker. But he said, 'I got some out in the car. I got nothing to chase it with, though.'" Junior's stash was apparently the real deal, moonshine right out of the mountains and, quite likely, highly illegal. Roy and his liver were more than pleased that he passed on Junior's offer.

Roy commuted from his home in





Roy visits with Luke Bryan at the 2015 ACM Honors; (right) Roy joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1987 and performed at the Opry Birthday Bash in 2010.



Virginia to Nashville for the *Hee Haw* taping sessions. A family man not given to excessive partying, Roy nonetheless answered the siren call of a Music City institution, Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, whenever he was in town. "I found out that Roger Miller and Willie Nelson would kick around at Tootsie's," Roy says. "[Songwriter] Hank Cochran was always there, too. So, I had to go down there." One particular excursion unnerved producer Sam Lovullo, mainly because Roy had an early call the next morning on the *Hee Haw* set. Sam actually went down to Tootsie's, located in Nashville's Lower Broadway corridor, to extract Roy and bring him back to the cast hotel. His efforts were not successful.

"Sam was there to come and get me," Roy remembers with a smile. "But I just said, 'We are not going anywhere.' I borrowed a guitar because I didn't have one with me and started playing." Producer Sam picks up the thread at this point and completes the story. "Roy grabs a bottle of beer and with the neck of the bottle, he starts playing the guitar," Sam recalls. "He was running the neck across the strings and it sounded like a dobro." Such was the nature of Roy's creativity—and persistence.

These days, Roy admits that he hardly plays at all during his

“[PEOPLE] USED TO SIT WITH THEIR MOTHER AND DADDY AND WATCH HEE HAW, AND THEY KEEP THAT AS A MEMORY. I’M JUST TICKLED THAT IT MEANS THAT MUCH TO THEM. THEY CONSIDERED ME A FAMILY MEMBER.”

Conversation concerts. But he'll still get out the guitar for regular tour dates, even though the hands don't work quite the way they used to. "Because of my spine, I haven't been doing that many shows where I play," Roy says, certainly frustrated by the limitations. "When you don't play for a while, it doesn't come right back. First

of all you lose your calluses, so you can't press the strings down. I have my schedule of rehab with my exercises to do every day, and that helps. But sometimes, the simplest things can be the most difficult. It's almost like, 'Now, how do I form that chord again?' It's hard when you've done something as a habit for so long and then have to try and think about it."

The Conversation shows afford him the chance to reconnect with the public, an opportunity for which he's grateful. "We talk about everything," Roy says. "There is nothing off limits. Some people start off their question by saying that they saw me on TV when they were in grade school," he adds, laughing. "They used to sit with their mother and daddy and watch *Hee Haw*, and they keep that as a memory. I'm just tickled that it means that much to them. They considered me a family member."

Roy spends most of his time at his home in Tulsa, Okla., with his wife, Barbara. Age and health have forced him to eliminate a couple of his former hobbies, namely flying airplanes and riding motorcycles. But he's hardly complaining.

"Other than the obvious," he says, pointing to his back, "I've been blessed with pretty good health. I think I had a really good career and I enjoyed every part of it." **NCW**

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**NASH Country
Weekly**

COUNTRY FOR LIFE



IT'S A FAMILY

WE ASKED SOME OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST STARS ABOUT THEIR FAVORITE THANKSGIVING TRADITION—AND FOR GOOD MEASURE, A LITTLE BONUS FACT ABOUT THEIR MUST-HAVE SIDE DISH.

TRADITION



CHRIS YOUNG

"Thanksgiving for us revolves around the three Fs: family, food and football. The main thing is family. Getting to hang at home and spend time with everybody is the biggest thing for me."

ON THE SIDE:
Stuffing



KAREN FAIRCHILD

OF LITTLE BIG TOWN

"Just being with family after a busy year is great, but we all get together and say grace before we eat. It's special every year."

ON THE SIDE:
Strawberry pretzel salad

COLE SWINDELL

"Obviously the food, especially being on the road all the time, that's one meal I get to look forward to with the family. My uncle is a big Cowboys football fan, so we always watch some football. That family time, especially the older I get, is just so important to me. Being with my family and the food is my favorite."

ON THE SIDE:
Macaroni and cheese



CANAAN SMITH

"We don't have a lot of traditions in our family. We do have a big game of football out in the yard, so I guess that would be a tradition. Mainly, we just have a big turkey dinner."

ON THE SIDE:
Stuffing



KELSEA BALLERINI

"I always watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. I'm not a good cook, so I think I just walk into the kitchen and taste-test all day. I can't cook anything, so I'm an eater. That's my tradition! I eat."

ON THE SIDE:
Sweet potato casserole



BRANDY CLARK

"I always like to watch the Thanksgiving Day Parade. That's always exciting for me. I get up, get my coffee and watch the parade on a lazy day."

ON THE SIDE:
Mashed potatoes



TIM MCGRAW

"Even though I live in a house with girls, I've gotten them to where they like to watch football a little bit with me, so we like to watch football and we like to watch movies. When we have time off and we're all together, the five of us, we like to hang out, cook meals and watch movies. For us that's a great time."

ON THE SIDE:
Cornbread dressing



BRENDA LEE

"Before we sit down to eat, we give blessings for our blessings."

ON THE SIDE:
Mashed potatoes



CHRIS JANSON

"We go down to my wife's granddad's farm in Adel, Georgia. She has so many cousins and aunts and uncles. It's old school because all the guys come in with plaid shirts that are buttoned down and tucked in, no hats. Men can't wear hats inside. We have a big time at the farm. I love it. It's my favorite time of the year."

ON THE SIDE:
Pecan pie



CLARE DUNN

"The main thing for us is just getting together with family. I go back to my parents' farm. The tradition is do the chores morning of, come back in and help cook. I'm a terrible cook, so I usually set the table and do other things. That's our main tradition, just being together."

ON THE SIDE:
Mashed potatoes



PRESTON BRUST

OF LOCASH

"Since I just got married, I'm ready to start some traditions. My little brother just moved down here not too long ago, so he's already down here, and maybe we can bring my parents down here and start a new tradition. But I think just watching my dad cut that turkey and carve it all up, it's pretty entertaining. He's a redneck and super-country and he'd rather do it with a buck knife than the knife my mom wants him to use. He's got his buck knife always ready, and when it comes out, my mom yells and says, 'Use *this one!*' It's crazy!"

ON THE SIDE:
Sweet potatoes



CHRIS LUCAS

OF LOCASH

"I don't know what it's gonna be like now. My family's different. My grandma passed. But we used to do game night. After Thanksgiving, we would play games and it was the funniest thing you'd ever see in your life. We'd have a blast doing that."

ON THE SIDE:
Canned cranberry sauce



RAELYNN

"We all get in a big circle before we eat and each one of us talks about what we're thankful for. There's like 30 of us, so if you're really hungry, it sucks. But it does mean a lot because every year there's something one of our siblings goes through and they talk about how they're thankful we helped them get through it. It's such an awesome, emotional time. We go from laughing to crying every year."

ON THE SIDE:
Corn casserole



KIMBERLY SCHLAPMAN

OF LITTLE BIG TOWN

"We gather our whole family together at our house every Thanksgiving, both sides, my husband's family and mine, all gather in Nashville. We have people everywhere, literally 16 or 17 people, for a whole week. We've got kids sleeping in walk-in closets and everywhere. It's so much fun. It's total chaos and disaster, but it's so fun. We cook and eat and we shop a little bit and cook and eat some more. It's a bittersweet time for us these days because my brother-in-law was killed on Thanksgiving three years ago by a drunk driver, but time is good. It heals. God and time, so this year will probably be a little bit easier. It's still very important that we get everybody together at that time."

ON THE SIDE:
Sweet potato casserole **NCW**



COURTNEY COLE

"This sounds so boring, but it's not boring. It's just become this activity where we put together a puzzle. My mom will get the puzzle with the most pieces to put together, the most epic puzzle. It's sounds simple and nerdy, but it's our tradition."

ON THE SIDE:
Dressing

SWITCHING LANES

UNLEASHING HIS FALSETTO HELPED **CHRIS LANE** FIND A DYNAMIC NEW DIRECTION FOR HIS MUSIC.

Chris Lane was crossing the proverbial finish line for his debut EP when he suddenly found his voice—his high voice, to be exact. Listen to the falsetto styling on his current single, “Fix,” and it’s easy to understand why he and producer Joey Moi ultimately scrapped the original EP game plan.

“I had about five or six songs recorded,” recalls the North Carolina native.

“Right about when I was finishing it, the song that would become my next single, ‘Fix,’ came along and there was something really different about it.” Mainly, the demo fea-

tured a high falsetto part that grabbed Chris’ attention like a breaking news bulletin.

“It was something that I took to immediately and was very comfortable for me to do,” Chris continues. “I started singing the falsetto part in the studio and Joey kind of stopped and said, ‘What was that you just did?’ He thought it was really incredible. And it was one of those moments when the light went off and we both said that this is what we should be doing.” The hunt then ensued to find songs with an aggressive R&B flavor that could display Chris’ versatile vocal stylings to his best advantage.

That meant, naturally, taking the EP that was nearly done and doing it in. “As painful as it was to wipe out all the songs we had and start over, I’m glad we did at this point,” Chris says with a relieved tone. “I wouldn’t have ended up with the songs I have now.”

Chris’ debut EP has finally seen the light of day, released on Nov. 13. The EP includes “Fix” and one tune that he co-wrote,

“Drinkin’ Games,” which contains a message that belies its seemingly formulaic title.

“That was actually one of my first co-writes when I first moved to Nashville,” Chris explains. “One of the writers

came in with the idea and I was honestly sort of turned off at first because there are already so many songs out there that talk about that. But we found a way to turn it into playing games with a guy’s heart.”

Chris first came to national attention in 2014 as the opener for Florida Georgia Line’s This Is How We Roll Tour. Now, fans can catch him as part of the Dustin Lynch Hell of a Night Tour, which will securely take him into 2016. “This will be the first tour where I’ve actually had music out,” Chris says. “I couldn’t be more excited about this.”

BOB PAXMAN

CHRIS LANE FIX



OVER EASY

WHEN CHRIS YOUNG came up with the title “I’m Comin’ Over,” he knew exactly what to do with it. Chris sent a text to two of his closest friends—songwriters Josh Hoge and Corey Crowder—so they could chew on the idea prior to their next writing session.

“Writing with Corey and Josh is always just so easy and natural,” says Chris. “It’s never forced. When we write, it’s usually really quick once we get in a room together. Lyrically, I don’t think we’ve spent more than an hour working on a song.”

When the trio sat down for a songwriting session, Corey had an idea for “I’m Comin’ Over” that got the wheels turning in all three of their minds. The further they delved into the concept, the more their song took shape into a sexy lyric about yearning for love, even if it’s not always for all the right reasons.

By the time they wrapped their session, the guys had a

scratch vocal down on tape, along with a basic loop and some acoustic guitar tracks. Corey and Josh were beside themselves with what they had just written, but Chris, as he always does, needed to separate himself from the song so he could revisit it with a fresh mind the next day.

“I need about 24 hours to get away from a song, and then I come back to it and listen to it and know if it was good or if I just got caught up in the moment thinking it was great, but it wasn’t,” Chris says. “That was totally the case with this one. I was really excited about the title and a lot of the stuff in the song, but it took me getting away from it to know for sure. The next day when I woke up, I listened to it and called them both, saying it was going to be the first single.”

The news was something that Josh and Corey had been hoping to hear since leaving their initial

writing session. While they both have had some minor cuts in their still-young writing careers, “I’m Comin’ Over” would be their biggest tune to date. Chris did, in fact, release it as the lead single from his new studio album—also titled after the song—giving all three friends something significant to celebrate.

“There is something to be said for the camaraderie between me and both of the guys I’m sitting in the room with right now,” notes Corey as he looks to his friends. “It’s one of the reasons I’m so excited about all of this.”

“Chris has been here before—Corey and I have not,” Josh adds, smiling. “We’ve been writing together for three or four years. This whole experience is really cool. Not only is this our first cut together, but it’s also our first single . . . and hopefully it will be our first No. 1.”

ALANNA CONAWAY

“I’M COMIN’ OVER” CHRIS YOUNG

WRITERS:



Josh Hoge



Corey Crowder

ALL IN THE FAMILY

JOSH HOGE isn’t the only hit-maker in his family. His brother Will Hoge has been cranking out albums since the mid-’90s, his most recent being *Small Town Dreams*, released in April. They also have a cousin making some waves of his own on the country charts as a

songwriter and producer—Zach Crowell. On the iTunes country singles chart, both Josh and Zach have had a hand in writing or producing eight of the current Top 30. Additionally, on the iTunes country albums chart, the guys are involved with six albums in the Top 20.



The week of Nov. 21, 2015

TOP 25 BILLBOARD ALBUMS

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	25	TRAVELLER CHRIS STAPLETON
2	1	STORYTELLER CARRIE UNDERWOOD
3	–	MR. MISUNDERSTOOD ERIC CHURCH
4	–	BUY ME A BOAT CHRIS JANSON
5	2	RELOADED: 20 #1 HITS BLAKE SHELTON
6	3	KILL THE LIGHTS LUKE BRYAN
7	6	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
8	4	TANGLED UP THOMAS RHETT
9	7	BETWEEN THE PINES (ACOUSTIC MIXTAPE) • SAM HUNT
10	5	CASS COUNTY DON HENLEY
11	8	COLD BEER CONVERSATION GEORGE STRAIT
12	17	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
13	9	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
14	16	JEKYLL + HYDE ZAC BROWN BAND
15	32	THE BIG REVIVAL KENNY CHESNEY
16	13	NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COUNTRY, VOLUME 8 • VARIOUS ARTISTS
17	33	PLATINUM MIRANDA LAMBERT
18	28	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
19	22	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
20	15	THE FIRST TIME KELSEA BALLERINI
21	19	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
22	18	ILLINOIS BRETT ELDERIDGE
23	30	RISER DIERKS BENTLEY
24	23	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
25	12	THIRTY ONE JANA KRAMER

TOP 25 BILLBOARD SINGLES

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	BREAK UP WITH HIM OLD DOMINION
2	2	LET ME SEE YA GIRL COLE SWINDELL
3	5	I'M COMIN' OVER CHRIS YOUNG
4	4	SMOKE BREAK CARRIE UNDERWOOD
5	6	NOTHIN' LIKE YOU DAN + SHAY
6	7	GONNA BLAKE SHELTON
7	3	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
8	9	GONNA KNOW WE WERE HERE JASON ALDEAN
9	12	TOP OF THE WORLD TIM MCGRAW
10	11	BURNING HOUSE CAM
11	13	STAY A LITTLE LONGER BROTHERS OSBORNE
12	18	DIE A HAPPY MAN THOMAS RHETT
13	14	ALREADY CALLIN' YOU MINE PARMALEE
14	15	I LOVE THIS LIFE LOCASH
15	17	I GOT THE BOY JANA KRAMER
16	16	RUN AWAY WITH YOU BIG & RICH
17	19	DIBS KELSEA BALLERINI
18	20	WE WENT RANDY HOUSER
19	22	BREAK UP IN A SMALL TOWN SAM HUNT
20	23	BACKROAD SONG GRANGER SMITH
21	21	COUNTRY NATION BRAD PAISLEY
22	24	21 HUNTER HAYES
23	25	(THIS AIN'T NO) DRUNK DIAL A THOUSAND HORSES
24	29	BEAUTIFUL DRUG ZAC BROWN BAND
25	26	LITTLE BIT OF YOU CHASE BRYANT

TOP 10 AMERICANA AIRPLAY

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL
2	2	LOST TIME DAVE ALVIN & PHIL ALVIN
3	3	PANHANDLE RAMBLER JOE ELY
4	5	SERVANT OF LOVE PATTY GRIFFIN
5	4	SERMON ON THE ROCKS JOSH RITTER
6	6	SOUTH BROADWAY ATHLETIC CLUB BOTTLE ROCKETS
7	7	HARD TO PLEASE THE BLACK LILLIES
8	8	GATES OF GOLD LOS LOBOS
9	9	CASS COUNTY DON HENLEY
10	11	PARADISE WOOD BROTHERS

SOURCE: AMERICANA AIRPLAY CHART

rdio TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY SONGS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	TENNESSEE WHISKEY CHRIS STAPLETON
2	BREAK UP IN A SMALL TOWN SAM HUNT
3	RAISED ON IT (ACOUSTIC MIXTAPE) SAM HUNT
4	RENEGADE RUNAWAY CARRIE UNDERWOOD
5	STRIP IT DOWN LUKE BRYAN

TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY/AMERICANA/SOUTHERN ALBUMS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	TRAVELLER CHRIS STAPLETON
2	DAMN COUNTRY MUSIC TIM MCGRAW
3	MEAT AND CANDY OLD DOMINION
4	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
5	BUY ME A BOAT CHRIS JANSON

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*DATA FROM NOV. 9, 2015



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with Jeremy Leon
Chua of Singapore



DUSTIN LYNCH
with Summer Biddle
of Tarboro, N.C.



JAMEY JOHNSON
with Robin Schubert
of Valdosta, Ga.



CHARLES ESTEN with
Wayne & Kristen Fritzinger
of Nesquehoning, Pa.



HOME FREE with Lori Sed-
lacek of Cinnaminson, N.J.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION (SEE PAGE 60)



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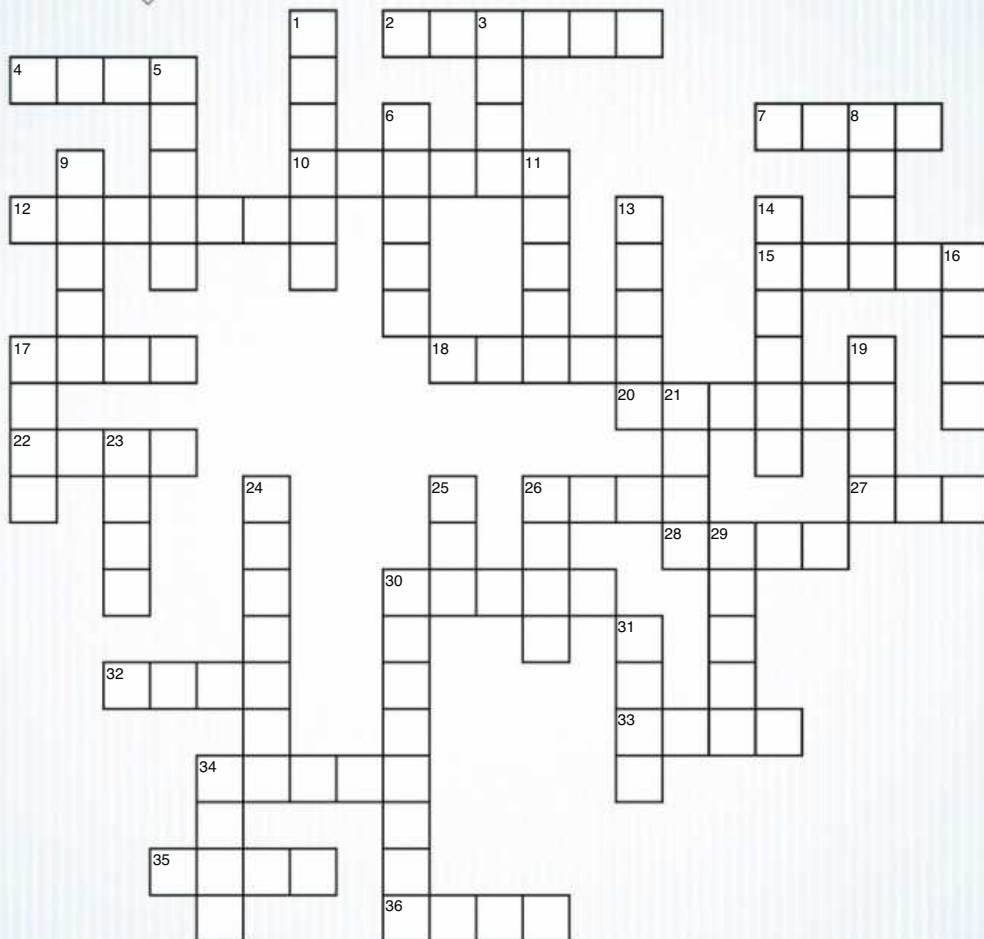
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CROSSWORD

by John Reiman



ACROSS

- 2** City in Spain or Ohio
- 4** "Smoke Rings in the Dark" singer
- 7** Kelsea Ballerini's "____"
- 10** To have something in abundance, in ____
- 12** St. Simons Island is here
- 15** Crystal Gayle and Gary Morris' "Another ____"
- 17** Keith Whitley's "I'm No Stranger to the ____"
- 18** George Strait's "One ____ at a Time"
- 20** "21" artist
- 22** Kenny Chesney's "Ain't ____ Yet"
- 26** *Thirty One* artist
- 27** Rascal Flatts' "Every ____"
- 28** Jamie O'Neal's "Somebody's ____"
- 30** U.S. Attorney General Loretta ____
- 32** Randy Houser's "We ____"
- 33** Tracy Byrd's "Drinkin' ____"
- 34** Walt Whitman's *Leaves of ____*
- 35** Bellamy Brothers' "Do You ____ as Good as You Look"
- 36** Shania Twain's 2015 ____ This Country Tour

DOWN

- 1** Capital of Poland
- 3** LOCASH's "I Love This ____"
- 5** Dolly Parton's "Rockin' ____"
- 6** Thomas Rhett's "Die a ____ Man"
- 8** George Strait album *Cold ____ Conversation*
- 9** Actress Knightley
- 11** British singer-musician Gordon Sumner, aka ____
- 13** "Wrapped Up in You" singer
- 14** Cartoon characters Sylvester and ____ Bird
- 16** Tim McGraw's "____ Country Music"
- 17** "I Keep On Loving You" singer
- 19** "Country Nation" singer
- 21** Monument Valley is here
- 23** Don Henley's new album ____ County
- 24** Green-eyed ____
- 25** Jason Aldean's "____"
- 26** Ricky Van Shelton's "From a ____ to a King"
- 29** Actor Hawke
- 30** "Let's Be Us Again" singers
- 31** Baseball's "Sultan of Swat"
- 34** Charley Pride's "You're So ____ When You're Bad"

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 Kennewick,
 Wash.

Dec. 6
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 Idaho

Dec. 7
 Spokane,
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Dec. 8
 Eugene,
 Ore.

Dec. 9

Dec. 10
 Shelton,
 Wash.

Dec. 11
 Lincoln City,
 Ore.

Dec. 12
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 Ore.

Dec. 13
 Redding,
 Calif.

Dec. 14

Dec. 15
 Deadwood,
 S.D.

Dec. 16
 St. Joseph,
 Mo.

Dec. 17
 Paducah,
 Ky.

Dec. 18
 Manistee,
 Mich.

Dec. 19
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Dec. 20
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Dec. 23
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Dec. 24

Dec. 25
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Dear Santa... #allIwant, #shortlist



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